

GOVERNOR SIGNS KEY BAR LEGISLATION

Governor Gray Davis has signed into law two key pieces of legislation backed by the State Bar: [SB 1897](#) by Senator Sheila James [Kuehl](#)), and [SB 1459](#) by Senator Gloria [Romero](#).

SB 1897, which took effect immediately upon signature as an Urgency measure, creates an immediate one-year exemption to the right of failed applicants for the General Bar Examination to view examination booklets for the Multistate Bar Exam. This change became necessary due to the recent decision of the National Conference of Bar Examiners, which produces the Multistate, to no longer provide examination materials to California for this purpose.

The Bar-sponsored bill also authorizes the Bar to collect voluntary fees on behalf of an independent successor entity to the Conference of Delegates and the California Supreme Court Historical Society. The former provision paves the way for a newly-created, completely independent Conference of Delegates of California Bar Associations to supplant the current Conference upon conclusion of the Bar's Annual Meeting in October.

SB 1459, which would create a presumption of jail time for non-lawyers convicted two or more times for the unauthorized practice of law, was the brainchild and top priority of State Bar President Karen Nobumoto. The bill also clarifies that disbarred or suspended attorneys that continue to practice law can be convicted of a felony, even if they don't advertise.

The measure was supported by a host of minority bar associations statewide, as well as the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office and the California District Attorneys' Association.

Los Angeles District Attorney Steve Cooley and Senator Romero will join the State Bar's

Board of Governors at a special meeting Thursday, September 19, to acknowledge the signing of the bill. Senator Kuehl may also be on hand in honor of the signing of SB 1897.

PERSONAL INJURY STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS, SUMMARY JUDGMENT MEASURE SIGNED

Governor Davis has signed into law, [SB 688](#) ([Burton](#)), which extends the statute of limitations for personal injury, wrongful death, and assault and battery actions from one year to two, and increases the required notice period for a motion for summary judgment from 28 to 75 days.

In his [press release](#) announcing the signing, Davis focused on the bill's tie-in to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks," saying that it "protects the victims of (those attacks) from making a hurried decision regarding selection of the forum and method for seeking compensation for their loss." Davis said the bill also "puts California into the mainstream of other states regarding its time limits for bringing an action for personal injury."

Regarding the summary judgment provisions, Davis said SB 688 "levels the playing field for all parties when a motion for summary judgment is filed and provides an opportunity to fully present arguments in opposition to a reviewing court.

[SB 688](#) was sponsored by the Consumer Attorneys of California, supported by consumer organizations and seniors groups, and opposed by the California Defense Counsel, the insurance industry, and employer organizations.

DEADLINE FOR ACTION

The governor has until midnight, September 30, to sign or veto all bills sent to him by the Legislature. Bills not acted upon by the Governor become law without his signature.